



# Lady Carlotta and the Forest Fire

illustrated by  
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BROCKVILLE - Owing to numerous bush fires in the vicinity it was thought the ascension would not take place. However, she sailed rapidly into the air. She had not the slightest idea where she was going, the earth being completely hidden by dense smoke.

She was destined to pay Canada a visit. She rose to an altitude of about 2 1/2 miles and drifted in a westerly direction.

The whole country was as dry as tinder; with here and there a flaming fence or field.

Where were forests on fire could be seen dense clouds of smoke, pierced here and there by tongues of flame, while in sundry places the clouds themselves seemed to burn.

A hydrogen gas balloon over such a region is as dangerous as a powder magazine, and its only protection consists in keeping out of reach.



Fully an hour was consumed by this drifting. Nearing the earth, she discovered that she was over a dense swamp.

She scarcely knew how she reached terra firma, but she did, and tying the balloon to a tree, worked her way out of the swamp.





She reached the road and came across Mr. Paul's wife. This good lady took her for a tramp, but when the situation was explained did everything in her power to offer assistance. A messenger was despatched to telegraph to Redwood, and then it being dark she was taken in and cared for.

On Friday, the spot was visited and the balloon cut down. It was lodged near the top of a pine tree, twenty-five feet from the ground, and must have taxed the lady's climbing abilities to get out and away from it.

The place where she descended is only about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from the river, which at that point is fully one and a half miles in width.

Had the descent been made in the water her death would likely have been the result.



The newspaper text is from  
The Brockville Recorder  
10 September 1881.

The journal excerpt is from  
"The Aerial Adventures of Carlotta,  
or Sky-Larking in Cloudland,"  
by Mary Myers, 1883.

This project was  
part of a longer piece  
submitted to  
The Sketchbook Project 2011  
on the theme  
"In Flight."

The original is in  
The Brooklyn Art Library  
in New York City  
and can be viewed in its entirety  
on their website

[www.sketchbookproject.com/brooklynartlibrary](http://www.sketchbookproject.com/brooklynartlibrary)

The illustrations were done  
in ink and watercolour on  
140 lb Arches paper  
in October 2010

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Cover: [detail] Bird's Eye View of Brockville Province Ontario  
Canada, by H. Brosius, 1874, from Library and Archives Canada.

